

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS:

1. (Previously Presented) Device for an electrophotographic production of image patterns on a recording medium, comprising at least one printing unit to which toner is supplied, elimination means for transferring used toner collected from a cleaning station to a used toner container, said means being interruptible in order to enable a replacement of the used toner container free of printing interruptions, and said means having a controllable coupling, which can be actuated during replacement of the used toner container, being connected between a drive and a conveyor shaft of the means for toner elimination from the cleaning station.

2. (Previously Presented) Device according to claim 1, wherein the used toner is transported between cleaning station and used toner container via an adapter unit with a conveyor through a conveying channel; and wherein used toner arising during the replacement of the used toner container is intermediately stored in the conveying channel.

3. (Previously Presented) Device according to claim 2, wherein the adapter unit comprises a flexible hose.

4. (Previously Presented) Device according to claim 3, wherein the emergence of the used toner from the adapter unit is preventable with the flexible hose.

5. (Previously Presented) Device according to claim 4, wherein a closing mechanism that is actuated for replacing the used toner container is arranged at the flexible hose.

6. (Previously Presented) Device according to claim 3, wherein the flexible hose has a material at its inside that is impenetrable for a toner and is toner-repellant; and in that it is preferably manufactured of silicone.

7. (Previously Presented) Device according to claim 3, wherein the flexible hose expands conical frustum-shaped in the direction toward the used toner container.

8. (Currently Amended) Device according to claim 3, wherein the adapter unit has a stable collar at the side of the cleaning ~~unit~~ station for acceptance in the cleaning

~~unit~~ station and has a stable receptacle at the side of the used toner container that is connected to a pivotable locking plate, whereby the flexible hose is held in the collar and in the receptacle.

9. (Previously Presented) Device according to claim 1, wherein the used toner container is accepted in a drawer seated in running rails, preferably telescoping rails.

10. (Previously Presented) Device according to claim 9, wherein, when the drawer is pulled out, a locking plate has an end facing away from its pivot point rising up on a ramp while compressing a flexible hose of the coupling and the locking plate engages behind a stop edge when the drawer is pushed in.

11. (Previously Presented) Device according to claim 9, wherein the drawer contains a pivot element pre-stressed with a spring that, when the used toner container is in its introduced condition, presses this against a filling level sensor; and in that the pivot element is pivoted against the filling level sensor in the status without introduced used toner container and simulates a fully filled used toner container.

12. (Previously Presented) Device according to claim 11, wherein the filling level sensor is a proximity sensor that outputs a full signal given a filling height of the used toner corresponding to the position of the proximity sensor.

13. (Previously Presented) Device according to claim 9, wherein a microswitch monitors the position of the drawer.

14. (Previously Presented) Device according to claim 13, which includes a control to evaluate the signal statuses of a filling level sensor and of the microswitch in order to control the replacement of the used toner container and printing operations of the device.

15. (Previously Presented) Device according to claim 2, which includes an intermediate container that can be pivoted in against the adapter unit instead of the used toner container during the replacement of the used toner container.

Claim 16 (cancelled).

17. (Previously Presented) Device according to claim 25, wherein the opening can be closed by a pivotable flap secured in the door.

18. (Previously Presented) Device according to claim 17, wherein the flap is fashioned so that it forms a collecting container for toner in the opened condition.

Claims 19-23 (cancelled).

24. (Previously Presented) Device according to claim 30, wherein the toner use is identified on the basis of printed picture elements and of a printing contrast that has been set and/or on the basis of a number of printed individual pages.

25. (Previously Presented) A device according to claim 1, which includes a toner reservoir with a filling opening for each printing unit being permanently installed in the device, a lockable door for covering the internal parts of the device and the toner reservoir, electrical safety means to stop operation of the printing unit when the door is opened, the door having a closable opening adjacent the filling opening so that the reservoir can be filled without opening the door to stop the operation of the printing unit.

26. (Previously Presented) A device according to claim 25, wherein the filling opening of the reservoir has a releasable mouthpiece.

27. (Previously Presented) A device according to claim 25, which includes means for generating a slight under-pressure in the toner reservoir during a filling procedure.

28. (Previously Presented) A device according to claim 27, wherein the means for generating a slight under-pressure includes the reservoir having an air elimination opening with a filter to retain the toner in the reservoir.

29. (Previously Presented) A device according to claim 25, which includes the toner reservoir having a filling level sensor to determine the filling level, said sensor generating an alarm signal when the filling level drops below a set position, and means to create an abort signal for the operation of the printing unit at a period after the alarm signal.

30. (Previously Presented) A device according to claim 29, wherein the level sensor is a capacitive sensor being mounted for displacement in an axial direction on an

outside wall of the reservoir and generating the alarm signal when the level falls below the sensor, said means to create an abort signal depends on the use of the toner after the alarm signal.

31. (Previously Presented) A method for changing a used toner container in an apparatus for an electrophotographic generation of image patterns on a recording medium, said apparatus having at least one printing unit to which toner is supplied, a cleaning station for cleaning used toner therefrom, and means for eliminating used toner from the cleaning station to a toner container, said method comprising the steps of interrupting a flow of toner in said means for eliminating, and replacing the used toner container without interrupting a printing operation of the printing unit.

32. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 31, wherein the means for eliminating includes a controllable coupling between a conveyor shaft and a drive of the means for eliminating, and said step of interrupting includes actuating the controllable coupling to stop the flow in the means for eliminating.

33. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 31, wherein the means for eliminating includes a conveying channel and an adapter unit, and wherein the step of changing the toner container includes storing used toner in said conveying channel.

34. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 33, wherein the step of storing includes closing the adapter unit while changing the toner container to prevent the emergence of used toner from the adapter unit.

35. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 33, wherein the apparatus includes an intermediate container mounted for movement between a position adjacent the adapter unit to receiving used toner from the adapter unit, and said method of storing includes shifting the intermediate container to a position under the adapter unit to receive the used toner as the used toner container is being replaced.